



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
San Diego Public Library

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**COLLAGES AND ASSEMBLAGES BY FLAVIA GILMORE ON VIEW
THROUGH JULY 30 AT THE PACIFIC BEACH/TAYLOR BRANCH LIBRARY**
Artist Uses Found Objects and Scrap Materials to Create Complex Works of Art

SAN DIEGO – More than fifty collages and mixed-media sculptures by noted San Diego-area artist Flavia Gilmore are currently on view in the gallery of the Pacific Beach/Taylor Branch Library. The exhibition, titled “Flavia Gilmore: Works from 2006 to 2011,” runs through July 30. The Pacific Beach/Taylor Branch Library, which houses the flagship gallery for the San Diego Public Library’s Visual Arts Program, is located at 4275 Cass Street. Library hours are Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 12:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.; Thursdays and Fridays, 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; and Saturdays, 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The branch is closed Sundays and Mondays.

Throughout her lengthy career, Gilmore has produced some of the most interesting art in the region. Now, at eighty years of age, she is more inventive, focused, and prolific than ever. A look into the artist’s San Marcos studio, a secluded building on the grounds of a hilltop property where she lives with her husband, offers insight into her creative process. Floor-to-ceiling shelves crowded with dozens of early sculptural works line one of its walls. Works in progress are randomly affixed to other walls. Most of the floor space is taken up by massive bins and worktables heaped with myriad odds and ends that she has been collecting for decades. It would likely take several lifetimes to incorporate all of these materials into assemblages, but it is from this junkyard-like environment that Gilmore, working intuitively and inspired by the panoply of shapes, colors, and textures that surround her, draws her inspiration.

The works on display in Gilmore’s current exhibition were created since 2006, the year of her last Visual Arts Program solo exhibition. In this new body of work, Gilmore continues to build upon her life-long interest in collage and assemblage. However, unlike

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her 2006 exhibition, which emphasized dark, industrial-looking assemblages, “Works from 2006 to 2011” features collages that are uncharacteristically colorful, decorative, and polished. Another surprise is their intimate scale. Although they pack a powerful visual punch and are intricately detailed, the smallest ones (composing about one-third of the exhibition) measure only a few inches square.

In a recent interview, Gilmore stated that her shift from a raw, gritty aesthetic to a lighter, more vibrant one, was deliberate; the result of a conscious decision to break away from the gloomy ambiance of her previous show. However, as one might expect from Gilmore, these collages are far from ordinary in their imagery, complexity, and movement. She admits that the time and labor invested in each one is staggering. But the effort has been worth it. At times, these works are more evocative of painting than anything else.

Also worth noting is the primary source material for the collages. Gilmore describes it as “domestic debris.” In other words, she salvages printed paper materials from her household trash (especially food labels, cartons, and packaging) which she then repurposes for high art. Much of the success of these works is attributable to the thinness of the materials she uses. A painstaking soaking, peeling, and drying process enables Gilmore to separate the tissue-thin, inked layer of a label, for example, from the paper it was printed on. Using strong magnification, she cuts out the parts of the design that interest her, then arranges and glues them accordingly. Referencing her sculptures, Gilmore occasionally works three-dimensional objects into the surfaces of her collages, and, conversely, many of the sculptures in the exhibition are augmented with collaged surfaces.

Viewers, who, over the years, have developed a preference for Gilmore’s larger, more rugged pieces will not be disappointed by this exhibition. In addition to the collages, a varied selection of free-standing, suspended, and wall-mounted assemblages is also on view. These include the first works from a new series of sculptures fashioned from steel wire and hundreds of scroll-like tubes of hand-rolled Japanese paper bearing sumi-e brush paintings, also by the artist. These sculptures, which resemble clusters of pods or chrysalises, are suspended from the ceiling by light chains. The interplay between such diverse media – the organic delicacy of the Japanese paper juxtaposed with the linear, industrial qualities of the wire – is truly sublime.

Aficionados of Outsider art, whose hallmarks include eccentric imagery and ingenious use of discarded materials and junkyard detritus, will find a lot to admire in

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“Flavia Gilmore: Works from 2006 to 2011.” Of course, as a formally trained artist, Gilmore doesn’t qualify as a genuine “outsider,” but she does work and live in relative isolation, and, like the outsiders, brings a unique perspective to whatever artistic issues she chooses to tackle.

NOTE TO EDITORS: High-resolution color digital images of many of the works in this exhibition, and photographs of the artist in her studio, are available on request from the library curator.

The San Diego Public Library’s Visual Arts Program is a nationally recognized series of exhibitions, lectures, a television program, and other art-related activities. The Ninth Annual Invitational Drawing Show is the most recent of nearly 150 museum-quality contemporary art exhibitions that have been organized by the Visual Arts Program of the San Diego Public Library since 1997. The mission of the Program is to demonstrate the Library’s role as a cultural institution embracing a broad range of disciplines, while assisting San Diego’s mid-career and older professional artists in achieving wider local, regional, and national attention. Visual Arts Program exhibitions are made possible, in part, by contributions from individuals, volunteer efforts, and the Friends of Central Library. For more information about the Visual Arts Program, the public can contact the library curator at (619) 238-6627 or visit the Library’s website at www.sandiegolibrary.org

Learn about other events at the San Diego Public Library’s Central Library and 35 branches, find links to numerous additional resources, or search for materials in the Library’s catalog online at www.sandiegolibrary.org

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